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A D D R E S S
T O

English Protestants,

Of every CLASS, and DENOMINATION.

RECOMMENDING

A

CONSCIENTIOUS ATTENDANCE

O N

PUBLIC RELIGIOUS OFFICES,

A S

Essential both to the TEMPORAL and SPIRITUAL
INTERESTS of MANKIND.

By neither a BIGOT nor ENTHUSIAST, but
A FRIEND to SOCIETY.

*Parcus deorum cultor & infrequens,
Insanientis dum sapientia
Consultus erro.*

NEWCASTLE:

Printed by ISAAC THOMPSON, Esq; and COMPANY;
and sold by W. CHARNLEY, in Newcastle, and all
other Booksellers in Town and Country.

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TO

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OF EVERY CLASS AND DENOMINATION

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EXTENDING BOTH TO THE TEMPLE AND ST. MARTIN

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BY ORDER A BIGOT FOR ENTIREMENT, FOR

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DEDICATION.

THE *Protection of the Pious to this Address is not solicited: if it be deserving, their Sense of the Value of social Worship will be a sufficient Inducement to countenance it.*

BUT,

To all who are already too wise to need religious Instruction—too giddy to attend seriously to the View of future Rewards and Punishments—or, too much polished to regard going to Church as of any Importance—To all who consider the Clergy as useless, if not a Nuisance to Society—and their Office, at best, as an Engine of State—To all who would rather dream through the Christian Sabbath, in the Arms of Sloth—spend it in loose Pleasure—or in planning, if not executing, the Businesses of Life, than attend the public Oratories—In short—To all who, either in Theory, or Practice, are Enemies to public Religion, it is peculiarly dedicated—And their Attention to, and candid Perusal of it, will highly oblige,

THE AUTHOR.

A N
ADDRESS, &c.

IF this Address only regarded speculative Notions, no way essential to the Felicity of the World, an Apology might be requisite; but as it is seriously designed to promote the Honor of Deity, and the best Interests of Mankind, give me leave to indulge the Hope of its being candidly received, weighed with Attention, and allowed to have Influence, proportionable to the Moment of the Subjects introduced, and the Arguments therein used.

LITTLE, it is hoped, need be said, to manifest the Excellence of Religion, and the Obligations by which Men are bound to cultivate it—for it is only by the Exercise of this, that we can spread the Glory of God on Earth: Virtue without it would sicken and die,

die, as this is the only Soil in which it can grow. So far too it is universally allowed to be essential to human Happiness, that no Society has been formed without introducing some Sort of System of it: and, what is of the highest Moment, all the Views and Hopes of the Species, beyond Life's narrow Verge, intirely depend on it. It is a Capacity for, and the actual Entertainment and Exercise of this, which elevate our Natures above the lower, and form an Alliance between us and the higher Orders of Being. To be entitled to the Denomination of *religious Creatures* is highly honorable, for that infers both intellectual and moral Powers. Strip Man of his Knowledge of, and Regard to Deity; take from him his Hopes of Immortality, and the Exercise of the religious Affections; and what will be left to dignify him above a Beast? His erect Posture would be a poor Claim to Pre-eminence.

BESIDES Religion is likewise the Source of our most exalted Enjoyments. To this we
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owe the truest Solace of the Soul, these elevated Relishes of Bliss, arising from the Contemplation of our Relations to God, and the animating Prospect of future Delights, unmixed, and without Period. In short—Religion alone is the Sun which brightens the Sky of human Life—that alone which can give Peace and Steadiness to the Soul, amidst its Storms and Tempests—and that only which can smoothe the Brow, and soften the Features of the King of Terrors to our View—nor, disjoin'd from this, is there any Thing in the Scene of Man that could make Existence desirable to the wise in Heart.

Now—Such being the Excellence and salutary Influences of Religion, might it not be expected, that it would be the unwearied Study of every Individual? But doth Experience set its Seal to this? By no Means. It is a shameful Solecism chargeable on many, that while they allow the Utility, nay the Necessity of it, yet they are regardless of the Means to make it prosper. It is a disagreeable Theme,
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to charge Men with the baneful Neglect of the Appointments of Heaven; but an unhappy Indifference to public religious Offices, at this Period, will bear no Denial.

IT is not, however, meant, to brand the present Age and Generation, as the most degenerate. I deem it a peculiar Blessing, to live in a Time so much enlightened, in every Kind of Knowledge. Never, perhaps, since the Apostolic Era, were religious Principles better understood, its Heaven-born Beauties more fully displayed, or its Charms made more attractive. Blessed be God, that Narrowness of Mind, those four Dispositions, that bitter Spirit of Persecution, and mutual Dealings of Damnation, for Difference of Sentiment, which have been the Disgrace and Plague of former Ages, are now out of Countenance! These dreary Notions of Religion, which threw a dark Veil over its native Beauty, and made it a Service of Sorrow, are now exchanged for more just and exhilarating Prospects. This
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much, and more, may, in Truth, be said for the Credit of the present Age. Would to God we could say as much for their religious Practice! But, as is common, we have run from one Extreme to another. In the Room of the Bigotry and Gloom of our Ancestors, we have sunk into a shameful Indifference to divine Things. They laid too much Stress on external Offices, and we look on them with Disregard, if not Contempt. This begun among the higher, and, like a deadly Disease, hath killed sacred Ardor, Zeal, and serious Devotion, among the lowest Classes: And, while the Means of Religion are neglected, must she not sicken and languish?

SOME, indeed, still run into the former Extreme, and take the Means for the End, the Dress for the Body. This I plead not for; nor for Moping or Gloom; nor any kind, or degree of Bigotry, or Enthusiasm; but for an earnest Regard to the Appointments of Jesus Christ: not for a bitter and
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fiery, but for a holy, regular Zeal for the Worship of God. No sincere Friend to this best Gift of Heaven, can behold the sacred Fire of Devotion languishing, without painful Feelings: And every one is bound, in his Sphere, to exert himself to add Fuel to it.

SHALL we examine a little into the *Causes* of this Laodicean Temper? They will be found such, as every one must be ashamed of.

HERE naturally rises to View—*Looseness of Principle*, the Stain of this enlightened Generation. However much, in many Things, we outshine former Periods, here our Horizon is greatly clouded. To border on Scepticism no way detracts from a polished Character: and he is hardly fit for the best Company, who will not join the Laugh at a Sarcastm, or perhaps, a miserable Jest on sacred Things. Too many seem disposed to inculcate, that Religion is the Invention and Bugbear of Priests and Politicians: and too many seem disposed readily to learn that Lesson. Every discern-
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ing Eye must see, that *the many* have not established religious Principles, to influence the Heart, and direct the Life: yet, without these, a conscientious Attendance on the Ordinances of God is not to be expected.

N E A R L Y connected with this, and supported by it, is *that Spirit of Giddiness and Levity* which too much characterizes the present Age. A Flippancy of Heart glares full on us, through every Class. How few, especially among the younger Sort, have any just Reflections on—what they are—what their Situation here, as moral Agents—or what their Prospects beyond Death—but allow themselves to be carried down with the Current of Life, fast, or slow, just as it goes; turn'd round and round, in its Eddies and Whirlpools, and reach the Ocean of Eternity, ere they have thought what it is? Now—while we thus flutter on the Wings of airy Levity, without manly Reflection, what Hope of a solemn Regard to Christ's Institutions? He who neither thinks
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of Rewards or Punishments beyond Death, will never exert himself to secure the one, and avoid the other.

BUT as a Branch of this same motley Family, I may here introduce—the *Love of idle Pleasure*, that Enemy of every Thing serious.

THAT this is a Feature in the true Portrait of modern Life, will hardly be denied. Abundance and Peace have produced their common Effects on ungrateful Man. In Place of raising our Hearts, with Thankfulness, to the bounteous Giver, we have sunk into the Lap of sensual Sloth, and loose Delight. These usurp the Throne of the Heart; they become the Idol of the Soul, and draw that Regard which alone is due to God and divine Things. Hence on every Side, may we behold our sacred Temples forsaken by Shoals of these Votaries of mean Enjoyments, who prefer the lowest Amusements to the noblest Exercises of the Soul. Such as would be accounted reasonable

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ble Creatures, ought to blush to bear such a Brand of Disgrace; and only their Numbers can keep them in Countenance.

Pride and Self-Conceit must here be allowed their Share too. These take Place in every Class of Life: such as have least real Knowledge, are most subject to them: for they are the natural Offspring of a little Soul: and wherever they do prevail, they whisper silently, that such are already far advanced in divine Knowledge; and perhaps, that already they are wiser than their Teachers. Would to God every conceited Heart could be convinced, that in Wisdom's Eye, they wear the Badge of Ignorance and Folly!

Mistaken Notions of Religion must also have a baneful Influence on the Institutions of Piety. Religion has often been considered as a gloomy, splenetic, and forbidding Thing; for which, indeed, it's public Teachers have given too much Ground: and wherever this is the Case, no Wonder if its Courts are deserted.

ed. This depends entirely on the State of the Mind; for, above all Things, Religion rises in Delights to the pious Mind, in Proportion as its Views are superior to all others. But, till the Soul be thus moulded, there is no Room to expect a due Regard to its Offices.

I might hold forth to View, as thinning Religion's Courts — *a lazy sluggish Disposition* — *a gross Mind bent on Mammon.*

I might mention *unhappy and sometimes unjust Prejudices* against those who lead the public Devotions — for some will desert Christian Assemblies, unless every Thing be shaped to their own Size and Model. Every Bigot is a true Disciple of the Giant Procrustes. Let it be candidly owned too, that the Ignorance, Imprudence, and Vices of some of Religion's Ministers cool Men's Hearts with Regard to Gospel Offices; as the Sons of Eli made *the Offerings of the Lord abhorred*. Various other Causes might be assigned, which bear their Part in producing this bad Effect — But I will
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now only subjoin one more, which I presume, is highly baneful, viz. *Common Custom and Example*. Men grow bold in the basest Things, when attended and led on by Multitudes—and act openly what otherwise they would be ashamed of. Unhappily, at present, it is rather unfashionable to be serious, and conscientious in attending public Worship. A Man's Character now suffers little for deserting the Altars of the Lord. With some, it is rather a Characteristic of superior Spirit, and Refinement. The Young, the Giddy, the Loose-minded, the Lovers of Pleasure, all behold these Things, readily imitate, and become fortified in their Follies. Thus Men join Hands in Sin; and poison the Minds of the rising Generation.

Now, let such as prefer the Haunts of Folly and Vice to the House of God, chuse which of these to acknowledge as influencing them: for some of these, or such like, must influence, unless downright Infidelity be at Bottom, which, I presume, is not
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so general. No Power of Oratory is necessary to display how base these are. They must either be renounced, or the Dignity of reasonable Beings is gone: and the Moment Men break these Chains of Folly and Vice, and return to enlightened Reason, that Moment they will also commence Votaries of the Institutions of Christ; to which I would rejoice to be instrumental in leading all who stand aloof.

IN order to this, let me *befeech* you to attend to the following Considerations.

HERE I would, first, argue with you on *the Reasonableness* of worshipping God in public. Every moral Agent is, I presume, bound to act according to the Reason and Nature of Things; and to pursue what he can discover to be right, though enforced by no positive, explicate Command. Such is the Case here: for it is not more evident that God exists, than that he is to be worshipped: and every reasonable Creature is bound to it, previous to the

the Consideration of any explicate Law. But it is social Worship we have now in View, and with equal Justice, we may infer the Reasonableness of this, from our joint Relations to God. We are all his Creatures, the Subjects of his Government, the Objects of his Care and Bounty, enriched with the Blessings of his Grace in Jesus Christ, and depending on him for the Continuance and Enlargement of them—Now will it bear any Dispute, whether we are not also bound to unite our Addresses to him; and to join our Vows, and every devotional Act, arising from these Relations and Dependencies? Subjects make joint Addresses to their civil Governors, for Favors they want in common; or to express joint Gratitude for Favors received. Thus do Servants to their Masters—and Children to their Parents; and will not Reason conclude more forcibly for united Addresses to the great Governor, Master, and munificent Parent of the Universe? Our National Honor, Safety, Peace, and Plenty, are the gracious Effects of a tutelary Providence; and Blessings we enjoy in

Common; hence the Obligation to a joint Gratitude is evident.

BESIDES—The numerous and solacing Joys which arise from the Connections we have with, and the Relations we stand in to one another; all the Strength and Security derived from social Ties; all the Endearments arising from the Relations of Husbands and Wives, Parents and Children, Brethren, Sisters, &c. and from the pleasing Connections of Friends, Neighbors, Benefactors, &c.; all these are evidently the Result of divine Wisdom and Benevolence, for our mutual Felicity: and they greatly sweeten the Cup of Life, smooth its rugged Ways, and level its steep Ascents. Now, what will Reason command, if not social Acts of Gratitude for these, and united Petitions for their Continuance? Nor should we forget, that Heaven's tutelary Care is no less displayed in preserving, than in giving these social Blessings. A thousand Accidents, which human Wisdom can neither foresee, nor prevent, may turn the Honey into Gall.

Gall.—Peace which sweetens Neighborhood may be exchanged for Strife—Love which cements Friends, give Place to Hatred—Strength and Safety, derived from Relations, may be lost by breaking the Ties of Blood—And the Endearments derived from the Relations of Parents, &c. may suddenly be dashed to Pieces on the Rocks of adverse Providence. You can have no Security for them, but in the Protection of God; and hence surely, he is intitled to your united Acknowledgements of Dependence.

BUT not only is public Worship *reasonable*, but *absolutely necessary*, if Religion is to be preserved among us.

IT would require no deep Researches into human Life, nor any very intricate Deductions, to manifest Religion's Fate, if Christ's Institutions were laid aside. Were Men born with it; or had they all necessary Powers, and Means, and Inclination too to cultivate it, distinct from public Institutions, they might
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be dropped; but as Things now stand, were this the Case, there is Room to fear, that a few Revolutions of the Sun would usher us into the darkest Courts of Ignorance in divine Things. Schools and Seminaries are necessary to propagate Science and Literature. — Proper Institutions and Encouragements are necessary to preserve, and improve the mechanic, and liberal Arts — Without these, we would degenerate into, what is called, the wildest State of Nature. Now Men are not self-taught in sacred, more than in other Things: neither Capacity, nor Inclination leads them more forcibly to their Study: Nay, habitual Attachments to sensual Things, gradually strengthen'd from the most early Periods of Life, will be found, I doubt, to make the wrong Scale preponderate. There must, therefore, be still more Need of religious Schools and Institutions: especially when we consider, that its chief Objects are invisible to our material Organs, and its noblest Hopes lie beyond the present Scene; so that it must be an herculean Labor, to disengage the
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the Heart from the enchanted Mansions of sensual Delight; and raise the Soul, on the Wings of a rational Faith, to behold the attractive Beauties of unseen Things.

BUT—How shall Religion be propagated? Shall Parents teach their Children—Masters their Servants – and the Old instil it into the Young? In this Scheme, Success might have been expected, in the Simplicity of patriarchal Ages; but as the World now goes, he who looks with half an Eye, may see the Fate both of its Theory and Practice, if left to this.

IF it be alleged—that the higher Classes of Life, having both Time and Means, need not the Assistance of public Institutions. It may be answered—that exalted Knowledge and Virtue are not inseparably united to elevated Station—and—that unhappily religious Knowledge is not accounted a necessary Appendage of accomplished Life.—And—if we except all who are under the Influence of a
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giddy and fantastic Mind; all absorbed in the Quest of Riches; all engulfed in motley Pleasures; and all who are infatuated with Ambition's gilded Dreams; How few will be left, who would cherish this divine Gift? As to the inferior Ranks, the Bulk are so employed in providing the mere Supports of Life, that public pious Offices are essential to their having any Knowledge of divine Things. "*One goes to his Farm, another to his Merchandize;*" the Hearts and Affections of some lie buried in Earth's Concerns, and need the Voice of public Religion to rouse them to the Views of Eternity. The religious Principles of others are as in a torpid State, and need to be warm'd to Life by the Fire of God's Altar. The Piety of Multitudes is choaked by noxious Weeds, and repeated public Exercises are necessary to clear the Soil. While great Numbers are so very gross and uncultivated, that, without these, they would hardly have any Idea of eternal Concerns. Thus, if such Obstructions lie in the Way both of the higher and lower Classes, Religion must

either be supported by public Institutions, or a Grave may be digged for her; and many, perhaps, would hardly utter a Groan over her Bier. But not to enlarge here—

L E T us suppose religious Ordinances laid aside; no stated Returns of public Prayer, &c. none to instruct, exhort, warn, or admonish; but every one, in this, left “*to follow the Sight of his Eyes, and the Desire of his Heart;*” and Religion left to make its Way by its own Truth and Excellence: doth any want a microscopic Eye, or prophetic Spirit, to foresee and foretel the Consequences? Would not Men’s Passions run wild, like uncropt Weeds—the Flesh gain more Influence over the Spirit—sacred Knowledge sink apace—and Religion languish, like a Fire that wants fanning—and sicken and die, like a Flower, for Want of the Air and Moisture of Heaven? While Society too would crumble in Ruins, like a Building, when the Cement is extracted from its Walls. Religion often droops in Spite of all that can be done to make it flourish:

rich: There needs not then the Wisdom of an ancient Seer, to discover what would be the Effect of depriving it of proper Supports. It will, I presume, be found, that it hath generally flourished, or decayed, as public Institutions have been well, or ill directed, and attended. So that the Question, in short, is, whether it is, at all, to be preserved among us? For if it be, next to the Blessing of Heaven, public Ordinances are most essential.

T H I S, however, is not all, for public religious Offices are *productive of many great Advantages to us*. To pass over their Influence in smoothing and polishing our Manners; and their being the chief Means of diffusing, and preserving, sacred Knowledge among the Bulk of Mankind, already taken Notice of—They hold the Place of public Monitors, and Remembrancers, so necessary to every Class and Age of Men: For every Age and Class have Syrens peculiar to them. Airy Dreams of imaginary Pleasures seduce the unwary Minds of Youth: A thousand Cares,
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like Fetters of Brass, bind the manly Years: And every Individual, besides, hath his favorite Passions, &c. to draw his Heart from God. Now, these stated Returns of social Worship are so many Mementos to Men of Life's perishing Scenes, and the sure Approach of Death; and thus become a Ballance against sensual Allurements; and the Means of keeping alive a Sense of God in the Soul.

W H A T E V E R Spirit of Devotion is to be found among us, next to the Grace of God, is to be ascribed to these. Perhaps it will be said—that Devotion may warmly influence by private Means. Be it so—but then it will be equally true, that such as would feed Devotion's Lamp in private, will also cherish public Offices: And, that such as throw Contempt on social Devotion, are most unlikely to cherish it in Secret. The Truth is—that though, under particular Dispensations of Providence, *e.g.* in Persecution, many may have warm Feelings of Piety, without the Benefit of social Worship; yet Experience will

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witness, that general Devotion either burns brighter, or more languid, according to the State of, and Attention paid to, public Institutions.

NUMEROUS, indeed, are the benign Effects of this. By frequent Reviews of the Objects of Faith, our Belief in Divine Things gains Ground. Public Instruction and social Devotion are the Food of Piety; enforce the Love and Fear of God; excite to Repentance; tend evidently to meliorate the Heart; and to kill Evil, and cherish good Dispositions. Doth not worshipping the God of Peace, and Love, naturally lead to calm the stormy Passions? Doth not Communion with the God of Mercy, Grace, and Forgiveness, lead to kill Malice, Revenge, and every infernal Affection? What so likely to beget, and foster in our Souls, Love, Charity, and every Grace, as uniting our Vows to that Being, who possesses every Excellence in an infinite Degree; and who has engaged his eternal Truth, to give high Rewards, through his Son Jesus Christ,

Christ, to all who cultivate and shine in them? Besides, we thus come under peculiar Obligations to the Exercise of the Christian Virtues. We see one another worshipping the God of Truth, Justice, Kindness, and Purity; and hence become ashamed to be detected in Injustice, Falsehood, or Ingratitude: And, what is of the highest Importance, constant Returns of Divine Ordinances manifestly tend to beget, and confirm religious Habits; and thus to make the Practice of it both more easy and pleasant.

LET us now, for a Moment, shift the Prospect, and consider *the Disadvantages*, that would attend the Want of the public Means of Grace. Here much cannot be necessary to be said. For though, in this Case, a few, under the peculiar Favor of Heaven, might maintain the Knowledge and Feelings of divine Things, yet to the Bulk they would be as little known as the most abstruse Parts of Science. Hence either Paganism in some Shape, or a corrupt State of Christianity, little better, would

would take Place. If these are essential to keep alive Religion amongst us, then the want of these would be followed by the most gross State of Soul: So that all Sense of God himself would, in great Measure, die in the Mind: And if a Sense of God, and of future Rewards and Punishments were gone, what would remain to stem the Tide of corrupt Passions? What Hold could you have of Men? What Security, that they would not steal, cheat, rob, murder, do every Thing for Interest, when they could elude human Sanctions? Nothing but a State of wretched Anarchy could ensue. What Havoc would be made in the Mind, if the Views of future Rewards and Punishments were removed! For these are the Fences which guard it against the Inroads of Temptation, and every foul Desire.

BEHOLD, the almost certain Fate of our Nation, if all public religious Institutions were laid aside! The Knowledge of Divine Things exchanged for barbarous Ignorance—Little either of God, or a future State known—Every

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noble Principle, devout Feeling, good Disposition, and animating Hope, sinking for Want of proper Encouragement—Every vicious Affection prevailing in the Heart—Mutual Distrust embittering every social Cup—The whole Horizon of Life darken'd—and a thick Veil drawn over our noblest Views beyond the Grave! Behold, then, what an Enemy he is to the best Interests of Mankind, who is instrumental in discrediting sacred Ordinances! The public Cheat, the Highwayman, the Robber, perhaps, is not a more baneful Member of Society. Such rob God of that Tribute of social Worship, which is due from his reasonable Creatures. They cheat themselves, and are instrumental in cheating others, in their highest Concerns.

BUT this is addressed to such as profess *the Religion of Jesus Christ*; so that the *Laws of Revelation* bind you. According to the ancient OEconomy, the Jews were to attend the Reading and Interpreting of the Law, every Sabbath, and Festival; and are your Obligations

tions weaker, with Regard to the Gospel? Jesus, the divine Founder of your Religion, has set you an Example in countenancing the Temple, and its Services, though then much polluted. The College of Apostles, and first Disciples, form'd under his Eye, also become your Patterns. No sooner had their Master ascended to the Right Hand of Power, but we find they "*all continued with one accord in Prayer and Supplication, Acts 1. 14.*" Nay it was their continued Practice; for after several Converts were made—"they continued daily, with one Accord, in the Temple, and breaking Bread from House to House, Acts 2. 46." And when Churches were gathered they were assiduous, in social Devotion, in Spite of all the Fury of the Heathen. Thus also taught St Paul "*How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard—and how shall they hear without a Preacher?*"—"Faith comes by Hearing."—and thus he by apostolic Power commanded, "*not forsaking the Assembling of yourselves together.*" Thus he who deserts Christ's Temples,

ples, in some Sense, rejects Moses, and the Prophets, the Apostles and first Disciples; nay, the Authority of Christ himself; and tramples on the express Laws, and Practices of Christianity.

TURN your Views to the *primitive Martyrs*—all the Engines of Cruelty, Death in its most frightful Forms, could not deter them from social Worship. Prisons echoed with their Songs of Praise—and Tongue joined with Tongue, even on the Rack, or at the Stake. They would rather have the Earth fattened with their Blood, than cease to acknowledge their God and Saviour. They bought the Liberty of Gospel Worship with the Hazard of their Lives; and shall we stand aloof from God's Courts, which stand safely open to us?

FROM this illustrious Group of *ancient Martyrs*, turn your Views to your *fellow Protestants* in modern Ages. Often has the Sword been

been drawn, and the Fires kindled for them, because they would worship God "*with the Understanding,*" would worship him "*in Spirit and in Truth.*" But did they therefore desert their sacred Oratories? No—they chose rather to lie exposed to the utmost Fury of Bigotry, and dark Superstition. Beside the more ancient Vaudois, look into the History of the Reformed Churches in Germany, Hungary, France, and the low Countries: With their Lives in their Hands, they entered their Temples; accounting public Communion with God superior to all Things. Now, either they were senseless Bigots, and wild Enthusiasts; or, if we desert God's Temples, we must be highly guilty in his Sight.

N A Y—Look back to our own *Ancestors*, little more than two Ages ago. No Fury of the Adversary could intimidate them from social Worship. Had a Laodicean Temper prevailed with them, there had been little Occasion for Smithfield Fires. Were these our Ancest-

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testors, once "*Witnesses for Jesus*," to rise from the dead, and behold some deserting Christ's Temples, by mere Sloth; others for secular Business, idle, or vicious Pleasures; would they not accuse us of great Degeneracy? Warmed with the Love of God, and the Grace of the Redeemer, how would their Hearts have exulted at the View of free Access to Protestant social Worship? If departed Spirits know what passes in the Scenes they have left; and if Spirits in Bliss be capable of any uneasy Reflection, it must give Pain to these British Martyrs, and Confessors, to behold the Lukewarmness of their Posterity, in the Worship of Jehovah.

BUT Arguments of another Kind also claim a Place here—For—Even *the Popish Churches* throw Shame on us in this Respect. We, indeed, justly condemn their Pagan Trumpery of Holy Water, Idol-Shrines, &c. but their Zeal for, and Conscientiousness in, what they account sacred Worship, are truly praise-worthy, and a Reproach to us. Shall their Oratories be crowded with Votaries, to worship they

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know not what, and in a Language equally unknown—Andours be disregarded where Jehovah is worshipped with the Understanding? Their Zeal and Assiduity have a great Effect in keeping alive that cruel and deceiving Superstition, in our Isle; while our Neglect of the Altars of the Lord, weakens the Cause of Liberty and Truth.

N A Y—Even *the Followers of the Impostor Mohammed* set an Example to us in this. Whatever may be said of the Nature, or Manner of their Worship; their solemn Regard to God, and Obedience to their supposed Prophet, and their Diligence in frequenting their Mosques, silently reproach us. We may blush to see Turks, Tartars, and Saracens, paying more Regard to a Deceiver, than we do to the Son of God. Five Times a Day they bow towards their Keblah at Mecca, and adore the one God: While some among us seem to think once a Week too much, for public Acknowledgments of redeeming Grace.

I M A Y add—That in this *the very Hea-*
thens will be found Witnesses against us. In
 ancient Greece and Rome, where they had
 Thousands of fancied Gods, every Shrine was
 respected, every Ritual solemnly regarded; their
 stated Solemnities, and appointed Festivals uni-
 versally honoured; and the allotted Worship
 paid to each supposed God, in their proper Or-
 der. Their Philosophers, though they had
 little Faith in their Gods, yet carefully coun-
 tenanced public Religion, from a Sense of its
 Value to Society: While too many among us
 rather discountenance even a rational Worship.
 The Diligence of the ancient Egyptians, in
 their Rites to their sacred Bull—The Atten-
 tion paid by the Chinese to their base Idol
 Foe, should make those ashamed who forsake
 the Assemblies of Christian Worshippers—
 Perhaps, I might even venture to say, that the
 Inhabitants of Pegu are more sedulous in their
 Rites to the Devil, than some professed Eng-
 lish Protestants are, in the Worship of the Crea-
 tor of the Universe. *We should blush, that these*
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Reproaches may be thrown on us, and that we cannot justly deny them.

Now—to sum up the Arguments, in one short View. We are bound to Affiduity in religious Ordinances by the Ties of Reason, by their Necessity to Society, and the very Being of Christianity among us—By the Advantages produced by them, and the miserable Consequences of their being neglected—Moses and the Prophets, the Apostles, and Christ himself, urge them, both by Precept and Example—We are called to them by the Patterns of ancient Martyrs, of many persecuted Protestants, and of our own Ancestors—Nay, even the Romish Churches, the Disciples of Mohammed, and the darkened Pagans, set us an Example, and reproach us, if we neglect them.

ARE these Things so? What then, can be found of greater Weight to cast into the other Scale? It would seem impossible, almost, that Men could plead any Thing in Excuse, with
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the least Shew of Reason.—Many, indeed, have alledged, that they *reap no Advantage by them*. It may be so; for Men may remain ignorant in the School of Wisdom. But it is no way improbable, that any Sense of God and divine Things, that even these Persons have, are derived from sacred Institutions, and that without them, they would be much more Barbarians as to all the Concerns of the Soul. But, if some really reap no Advantage, where is the Blame to fall? The best Seed will not grow on a flinty Rock, without Earth or Moisture. The wise and virtuous feel their sacred Efficacy; and so will those, who thus complain, as soon as their Souls are attuned to divine Things.

THE *Ignorance, Follies, and Corruptions of the public Ministers of Religion*, are also alledged as an Excuse for deserting the Temples of God. No Doubt, this is a great Discouragement: But yet will not be found sufficient. Our Lord attended the Temple Worship, though

though even the "*Scribes and Pharisees sat in Moses's Seat, who had made the Law of God of no Effect, &c.*" Men cannot, indeed, in that Case, enter into holy Offices with so much Spirit and Pleasure. But there is this Encouragement, that the Blessing of God depends not on the Character of the officiating Minister. Our pious Addresses, offered through Christ, by the Assistance of the Spirit of God, will rise as pure Incense to the Divine Throne, though his Ministrations be condemned. At any Rate, the Faults of public Teachers cannot break our Obligations to honor Jehovah publicly; nor need any Conscience be hurt; where religious Means are so frequent, and in such Variety; and religious Liberty unrestrained. After all, every Contemner of these is nearly concerned to know, whether his Excuses will still his Conscience in the Hour of Dissolution—and whether he will dare venture to plead them at the Tribunal of Christ: If not, all is Deceit, and he is cheating his Soul into Ruin.

WOULD

WOULD to God! none would lay down
 their Heads on the Lap of Security; nor al-
 low their Spiritual Powers to be dissipated, in
 the delusive Pavilions of sensual Delight;
 That all would remember, they are capable of
 moral Obligation, and designed for Eternity!
 Shall the continual Displays of the Creator's
 Love pass unacknowledged by his reasonable
 Creatures? Shall the Fountain of the Redeem-
 er's Kindness flow in vain? To desert the Chri-
 stian Oratories, is pouring Contempt on the
 Blessings both of Creation and Redemption;
 and renouncing all Interest in the Gospel
 Scheme—Shall the Seats of Business, the Courts
 of Pleasure, be crowded with Votaries; and
 the highest Offices of Life, the noblest Em-
 ployments of the Mind, be disregarded? See
 how the Interests of Life are pursued! Safety
 and Pleasure, are exchanged for Danger and
 Toil—The stormy Sea is ploughed; its Bil-
 lows, Winds and Tempests are braved—Men
 fly not from the Point of the whetted Sword;
 nor recoil from the Mouth of the deathful
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Cannon—all for Interests of which they may be eternally stript next Hour! And will any neglect the Means, appointed by Divine Love, for the Perfection of their Natures, and the everlasting Friendship of God?

SUCH as are *fondled on the Lap of an indulgent Providence*, are bound to manifest their Gratitude, in Zeal for the public Honors of Jehovah; proportionate to the distinguished State, to which his Sovereign Wisdom has raised them. A rich, powerful and prosperous Man prostrate before God, and breathing forth his Thankfulness for peculiar Kindness, is an amiable and great Character: But such a Man, bidding Defiance to the Father of Benevolence, is a Monster in the Creation.

THE *poorer Classes* who lie obnoxious to numerous Wants, Fears and Pains, here *only* are on a footing with the greatest of the Earth. Equal Access to the Throne of Grace is opened, and the Treasures of Mercy as ready to be dealt out to you, as the most lofty Potentate.

You

You have not the good Things of this Life, and if you give up the Hopes of Godliness too, your State will be truly miserable—But, however mean in Temporals, if you be rich in Grace, God will give you an honourable Place in his Esteem. Besides, where can you so properly go for Consolation, under your various Trials, as to the Courts of God's House, peculiarly appointed for dispensing his Blessings? The poor, who stand aloof from the Temples of Christ, take the Way to be deprived of every Comfort.

SUCH as are advanced to *maturer Life*, whose declining Sun is hastening down, are doubly bound to Diligence in sacred Offices; for not only the Night of Eternity approacheth, but their Neglect will lead the younger Tribes to Sin, who naturally copy what is agreeable to their opening sensual Desires.

WOULD to Heaven! *the younger classes* would be prevailed on to enter on Life in the Fear and

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Worship of God, as the surest Means of a comfortable Passage through it, as well as the only Road to future Joys. However sensual Delights may flatter your unexperienced Hearts, sooner, or latter, you will find, that there is no fixed Rest nor Bliss to the Soul, but in the Favour and Love of the Almighty.

LET *Parents* consider, how much their Children will be influenced by their Examples; and whether, if they neglect the Public Duties they owe to God, they are not chargeable in some Sense with murdering the Souls of their Offspring — Every humane, and every tender, as well as every sacred Tie, bind you to public Religion.

YE *Brethren, Friends, Neighbors, every Relation and Connection*, your Examples will each influence, in some Degree, in your own Spheres; you cannot therefore, absent yourselves from public Devotion without injuring the

the spiritual Interests of some around you: And who can bear the Thought of contributing, *in any Measure*, to the Destruction of an immortal Soul!

To conclude my Address. Let me conjure you all by the tender Mercies of God, by the Love of Christ, and by your Desires of Happiness, sincerely to resolve, by the Aids of Heaven, on a regular and devout Attendance, on every Christian Institution, in that Way, which the Judgment of each, carefully informed, most approves of. And—I bid you farewell, with the following well known Reflection—That, though, in the Sunshine of Youth and Prosperity, Religion may not seem essential to our Happiness, yet nothing else can cheer the Gloom of hoary Age; soften the Bed of Affliction; or smooth, and enlighten our Passage, into the World of Spirits—And there can be no just Ground to expect Religion to flourish, and be fruitful in us, without
these

these Means, and that Culture, appointed to
these Ends, by infinite Wisdom and Grace.

*May the great Object of religious Worship
awake devout Feelings in every Heart and dis-
pose every Soul to do his Will! AMEN.*

F I N I S.

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